

tance the author claims for the subject, on the ground that what London is to-day Manchester and Birmingham may be to-morrow. The next chapters deal with "The Reparation of Old Properties" and "The Building of Houses in New Areas." In these the writer brings out the fact, which should never be absent from the mind of the practical reformer, that until a sufficiency of houses for the normal wants of the community is supplied, sanitary authorities are hung up in the attempt to apply the ample powers they possess to bring pressure to bear on landlords to repair slum properties.

With regard to new legislation he indicates two directions which it should take. The first is the simplification and consolidation of the five or six Acts that have been passed in amendment of the great housing reform charter of 1890. The other is the omission from them of all reference to the "working classes," so as to enable local authorities in their building schemes to provide for the mixing of the classes in the areas which they control (p. 137). This last suggestion is sufficient indication of the broad, humane spirit in which Dr. Robertson approaches his subject.

The book ends with a suggestive chapter on "The Present Shortage and the Proposed Remedy," in which he explains the present line of the Government, first in offering substantial assistance to local authorities for building houses; secondly, in the Housing and Town Planning Bill of the present year. In spite of the great rise in the cost of building houses of the kind suggested (Dr. Robertson puts it as the difference between £250 and £700—we now know that the latter figure will be nearer £950), he is full of hope for a "satisfactory solution of the great task which is now before the nation" (p. 149). The value of this little book is enhanced by 12 diagrams, an up-to-date bibliography and an excellent index.

J. H. MUIRHEAD.

Dick, J. LAWSON, M.D., F.R.C.S. *Defective Housing and the Growth of Children.* George Allen and Unwin, Ltd; price 3s. 6d. net.

IN the period of reconstruction before us there is no problem so urgent as that of child nutrition. Everyone who has experience of child welfare work in our great cities will cordially agree with Dr. Lawson Dick's assertions with regard to the relation between bad housing and the nutrition diseases of childhood. Those who have not such experience have even more reason to read and profit by this little book, which gives an excellent summary of the etiology and stigmata of rickets.

One does not entirely agree with certain statements, of course. The author says, "Deficiency of food and errors in diet will aggravate rickets, but no diet, however efficient, will prevent the occurrence of rickets if the child is brought up under slum conditions." That is not my experience. There is no one cause of rickets. One theory is that it is in the main due to a deficiency of fat-soluble vitamines. It is also, I admit, a disease of bad housing; but why is rickets more prevalent in Glasgow than in London? Not because Glasgow slum housing is worse than London slum housing, surely. I have seen worse slums in London than in Glasgow, Dublin, Paris, New York, or Canton. But Glasgow is the place where rickets is seen at its best and worst—at its best from the medical student's point of view, its worst from the standard of the social reformer.

Dr. Lawson Dick's book is, in small compass, one of the best résumés of the subject I have read. His chapters on the stigmata of rickets and on the mental development and the endocrinous glands in rickets are a valuable contribution. With his contention that any scheme of feeding will inevitably be a failure so long as slum and housing conditions are left as they are we must, in the main, agree. Housing reform is the basis of preventive medicine and social reconstruction, and this book is to be recommended to students of social reform and to everyone interested in the welfare of the child.

ELIZABETH SLOAN CHESSE.